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SCIENCE.

FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 1887.

COMMENT AND CRITICISM.

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION for the advancement of science has decided to hold its thirty-sixth meeting in New York City during the week beginning Aug. 10, 1887. It therefore becomes the duty and privilege of the scientific and educational institutions of the city and vicinity to provide for the meeting in a manner which shall be creditable alike to themselves and to the metropolis. The Academy of sciences, having been asked to take the initiative in the matter, has appointed a committee of conference to secure concert of action among the several institutions. A meeting will be held at the Hotel Brunswick, at 8 o'clock, on the evening of Friday, April 29. The special work before this conference will be the consideration of ways and means, and the formation of permanent committees, which, united, shall constitute a local committee for the meeting of the association. This great national gathering of scientists will be an important event in the history of our city, and should mark an epoch in the development of scientific interest in the community. It is highly desirable, therefore, that the association should find a cordial welcome, and should receive a kind and degree of interest and hospitality worthy of the great metropolis.

THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY which Columbia celebrated last week, following so closely Harvard's two hundred and fiftieth birthday, is significant of the fact that our larger institutions of learning are growing old. They are evidences of the wisdom of their founders, who, amid all the turmoil and care of opening up a new country to civilization and of developing fitting forms of government, found time to lay the foundations for what have since become the leading colleges and universities of the country. Columbia's centennial was more or less fictitious, since the original charter to King's college bore the date 1754; and the annual commencement in June next is the one hundred and thirty-third. The celebration was really, as the official bulletin announced, of the hundredth anniversary of the

"revival and confirmation of the original charter by the legislature of the state of New York." There is much in Columbia's history and in its personal associations to make it peculiarly the college of the city of New York. As Mr. Coudert pointed out in his admirable oration, Columbia has grown with the city's growth, and flourished with the city's prosperity. The prominent men of New York, from Alexander Hamilton and John Jay and DeWitt Clinton to Hewitt and Dix and Agnew and Woodford, are numbered among its alumni. Its influence, though ultra-conservative, has been, on the whole, for good. Under the enlightened presidency of Dr. Barnard, the policy of the college has become more liberal and aggressive, and to-day it is doing far more for the community than it has ever done before.

Having come so far and done so much, the question is naturally raised as to its future development. The public press is urging that the college, with its associated schools of applied science, of medicine, of law, and of political science, should organize itself into a genuine university, and offer those opportunities for advanced instruction and research which its faculties and its situation are so well fitted to provide. The very obvious answer to this is that such a scheme requires large amounts of money; and Columbia has in the past been the recipient of almost nothing, while Harvard, Cornell, and Princeton have had gifts in abundance showered upon them. Columbia is struggling under a heavy debt, and, until that is removed, entrance upon a university career is impossible. Furthermore, its equipment is far from complete. It needs a physical and a biological laboratory, a department of comparative philology, additional provision for historical science, an enlargement of the ludicrously small philosophical department, and, more than all, a library fund which will provide for the book purchases that ought to be made. All these are things not known, perhaps, to those who are clamoring for a university, that serve as an effectual barrier to university development. They are details well known to Columbia's management and alumni, but only made public by the discussions consequent upon the recent

centennial celebration. The friends of the college are in hopes, that, now that these obstacles to rapid development are made known, they may be speedily removed.

A MOVEMENT HAS BEEN STARTED to found a laboratory on the New England coast, where students, teachers, and investigators may find facilities for the pursuit of biology. It is now some years since the brief episode of the Penikese laboratory, which was founded by Mr. Anderson and intrusted to Professor Agassiz. During the interval, summer schools of science have multiplied, and a few of them have successfully maintained their modest usefulness. Of these, one of the most prosperous as well as most needed was the seaside laboratory established at Annisquam, near Cape Ann, six years ago, by the Woman's education association, with the co-operation of the Boston society of natural history. It has given instruction to no less than 102 students, men and women from many states, who were for the most part teachers. The instruction has been almost wholly gratuitous, and the equipment of the laboratory meagre; but the opportunities offered have been sought and prized. As the association does not give permanent support to any of its enterprises, and as its committee in charge of the laboratory was convinced of its utility, they sent a circular letter to teachers of science in different parts of the country, giving an account of the work done, and asking for opinions as to the need of such an institution. The letters received were full and explicit, showing a deep interest in the project of founding a seaside laboratory of broader scope. The committee then called a meeting, at which there was a large attendance of naturalists, the majority being officers of New England colleges. At this meeting the discussion showed a unanimous approval of the work begun at Annisquam and an emphatic resolution to extend and perfect it. To execute this resolution, a committee was appointed with full powers to establish a laboratory on an improved and permanent foundation. This committee, which consists of Prof. Alpheus Hyatt, (chairman), Prof. S. F. Clarke, Mr. John Cummings, Dr. W. G. Farlow, Prof. E. L. Mark, Miss S. Minns, Dr. C. S. Minot, Prof. W. T. Sedgwick, Mrs. C. C. Smith, Mr. B. H. Van Vleck, Mr. Samuel Wells, and Miss A. D. Phillips (secretary), is endeavoring to raise fifteen thousand dollars, half the sum to be used for the land, building, and equipment, the other half to be applied as a guar-

anty fund for the expenses during five years. It is to be hoped that all those will respond liberally to this appeal, who are interested in improving the methods of education and in contributing to the advancement of science. Subscriptions may be sent to any member of the committee, or to the treasurer, Mr. Samuel Wells, 31 Pemberton Square, Boston, Mass.

The advantages of the prospective laboratory are manifold. The demand for natural-history teaching has rapidly increased in America. Colleges and schools are seeking teachers competent to give instruction in botany and zoölogy; but teachers have difficulty in fitting themselves in these sciences, because they lack opportunity to obtain suitable training. An additional obstacle to the thorough and practical study is, that many of the most important types of plants and animals are exclusively marine, having no inland representatives. It is impossible to give good biological instruction without immediate familiarity with the principal types of living organisms. The new laboratory is intended to offer practical training in biology with special reference to marine forms. It is hoped that its work in this field will render it a valuable factor in education. The laboratory will also supply collections and materials for class-work to schools and colleges. Advanced workers and specialists will have facilities such as have not existed in this country hitherto, although they have been available in the different biological laboratories sustained by Germany, France, Austria, Italy, England, Scotland, Holland, Sweden, and Russia. The inestimable benefits which have ensued from the discoveries of biologists, and the profound influence of their science upon modern thought, fully justify the attempt to found a laboratory for biological investigation. The experience of the marine stations in Europe, of the summer school at Annisquam, Mass., referred to above, and of the more southern laboratory of the Johns Hopkins university, have established beyond dispute the great value to education and to science of such institutions. The proposed plan of the laboratory, which will be opened this summer if the necessary means are obtained, may be briefly described so far as settled. The management will be intrusted to the following board of trustees: Prof. W. G. Farlow, Miss Florence M. Cushing, Prof. Alpheus Hyatt, Dr. Charles S. Minot, Miss Susanna Minns, Prof. William T. Sedgwick, Samuel Wells, Esq. It is

